

The Future of Audience Development

Research, Training & Practice

ADESTE Audience Developer: Skills and Training in Europe
FINAL PROJECT CONFERENCE SUMMARY

10-11 March 2016

University of Deusto, Bilbao & Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain)



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Introduction

Over the course of two days in Bilbao and Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain, more than 100 participants from Europe and beyond attended "The Future of Audience Development: Research, Training, and Practice", the final conference of the ADESTE project (Audience DEveloper: Skills and Training in Europe).

This major gathering was an opportunity for the ADESTE consortium to present the work it has done over the past two years to research, design and test a training module for cultural professionals working in audience development. The conference opened with an introduction to the project, a presentation on "From idea to practice: building audience development skills", followed by a lively discussion with ADESTE trainees who were professionals having participated in the training module pilot testing phase to learn about their successes and challenges taken from the experience.

Next, participants broke into parallel sessions for ADESTE trainees, professionals in the cultural and creative sector, as well as academics. The aim of these parallel sessions was to provide space for discussion on the training process, hard and soft skills for the "Audience Developer" professional profile, and the latest researching being conducted on the topic of audience development.

The afternoon session kicked off with keynote speeches on the theme of "Audience development from a cultural policy perspective" with experts

representing three levels: European, regional, and local. Invited to share their perspective and knowledge were: Monica Urian from the European Commission; Henrik Martén of Kultur i Väst in Sweden; and Joanna Sz wajcowska from the Capital City of Warsaw in Poland.

The day closed with a World Café session where the audience was divided into smaller groups to have more in depth discussions on how to support audience development, the skills and competences needed, and the role policy should play.

The second day began with a presentation of the Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 European Capital of Culture which provided an insight into the programming, challenges, and audience-focus strategy developed for such a major European initiative.

This was followed by another keynote speech given on the topic of "How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations, a study on audience development at European level" delivered by Cristina Da Milano from ECCOM - Idee per la cultura. Her intervention opened the debate that came after on "Audience development: between practices and theories" where leading experts, cultural practitioners, and academics from around Europe shared their points of view on what should be done now and in the future to support audience development in Europe.

Running over the course of 30-months (01/11/2013-30/04/2016), the project ADESTE - Audience DEveloper: Skills and Training in Europe was funded with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union.

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The second day's afternoon programme included technical visits to flagship cultural institutions in Donostia-San Sebastián where participants met with cultural operators to learn how local cultural institutions are leading with an audience focus thanks to examples of strategies and programmes that have been put in place to reach and expand cultural participation.

The two-day ADESTE conference also included a rich cultural programme and many networking opportunities for participants to enjoy the local cultural scene and to expand their professional contacts.

In addition, the varied formats of the sessions as well as the MeetAbout technology encouraged the participation of all the attendees. Involvement and discussion generated during this event are a major contribution made to the ADESTE project; its philosophy and principles survive beyond its official end in April 2016. It was evident from the interactions during the conference, the greetings, handshakes, conversations and good-byes that ADESTE has built long lasting relationships, fostered mutual understanding, and encouraged intercultural dialogue.

If this event had been a cinematic saga, it would have been closed with the words "To be continued...", since ADESTE is a beginning and promising project, with a long way ahead. Therefore, this ADESTE main dissemination event, should not be considered a final Conference, but a transitional conference into something more significant that is still developing, but that will for sure see the light in the near future.

In the following pages we look a little more closely at some of the discussions and presentations at the conference. This document is intended to compliment the [speakers' PowerPoint presentations](#) that can be found on the ADESTE website.

Did you miss the discussion on Twitter?



See some examples of what was being shared on Twitter during the #adesteproject conference on #audiencedevelopment

[@ENCATC](#)

Embracing #audiencedevelopment can be a slow process for cultural institutions. Be patient. It takes time to change mindsets. #adesteproject

[@dvinb](#)

Introducing #AudienceDevelopment into an organisation's strategy can be disruptive. Let's provide mentoring for this process #adesteproject

[@MonicaUrian](#)

personal skills/attitudes are fundamental for the audience developer, who works in the 'spaces in between' @audienceagents #adesteproject

[@TipsTheater](#)

Artist as Audience Developer? Cultural Organisations as industries of hope? Suggestions by @MarcinPoprawski at #adesteproject

[@BenitaLipps](#)

Cultural participation is a key element of active citizenship in Europe, says @MonicaUrian at #Adesteproject

[@ENCATC](#)

There are as many audience developer profiles as there are cultural organizations #Adesteproject #audiencedevelopment

[@dvinb](#)

Introducing #AudienceDevelopment into an organisation's strategy can be disruptive. Let's provide mentoring for this process #adesteproject

[@maremilano](#)

#adesteproject #audiencedevelopment is about people and practices not just tickets and events @lalegari



Lessons Learnt: A Talk with the ADESTE Trainees from Different EU Countries

What was it like for cultural professionals who were trainees in the ADESTE training module on audience development? Which aspects of the programme were most useful to them? How has the experience changed their approach and view of audience development?

ADESTE has designed and tested a training module aimed at helping cultural professionals in their development of key competences for the expansion, diversification, and engagement of participants in all kinds of cultural experiences. On 10 March during the ADESTE final conference, four of these professionals shared their experiences.

The discussion panel “Lessons Learnt: A Talk with the ADESTE Trainees from Different EU Countries” was facilitated by Gerald Lidstone of Goldsmiths, University of London, the ADESTE partner responsible for the ADESTE trainee evaluation survey. He was joined on stage by Chiara Organitini from CAOS – Centro per le Arti Opificio Siri in Italy, Susana Pallarés Espinosa from the Associatción Inspira in Spain, Katharina Thordia Raagaard of the Cultural Metropole of

Oeresund in Denmark, and Malgorzata Witon from POLIN – the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews in Poland.

From the start of the panel discussion there was a clear consensus among the speakers that their participation in the pilot testing phase of ADESTE’s training module was a positive experience. They gained new knowledge, skills and competences to work in audience development. They expanded their professional contacts beyond their national borders by gaining access to a small network of other professionals (ADESTE trainees) enrolled in the training in other countries. They met with leading audience development experts, academics and researchers to gain key insight, ask questions and receive feedback.

But what would ADESTE trainees have changed and what surprised them most from the training? How did they react to Action Learning, a key component introduced? What opportunities did they think could open up in the future from this experience? Let’s take a look at the reactions from the panel and what were the most important takeaways shared during the discussions.

What would trainees have changed?

From the evaluation, there were as many different answers as there were trainees. This is understandable as the trainee profile was open to

professionals from all types of organisations in all fields of culture (performing arts, museums, libraries, festivals...). There was also a strong diversity of cultural backgrounds and individual needs of trainees at different stages of professional development and progression.

While there were more “expected” answers one might foresee such as more having time, more examples of case studies, more peer networking that were often limited due to the project’s timeframe and human and financial resources, there were some interesting and unexpected requests not foreseen during the design phase of the ADESTE training module.

Am I an ambassador of change?

As a requirement to participate in the ADESTE training module, trainees had to have the support of their employer. The aim was to ensure the organisation was open to audience development strategies and practice. It was expected ADESTE trainees would share what they had learned with their cultural organisations. They would also serve as “ambassadors of change” by bringing new enthusiasm and innovative ideas to stimulate their employers and to lead with a stronger audience focus. However in reality, the idea or openness to acceptance and change are not immediately embraced or translated into concrete actions. The little or slow embrace of an audience focus did not always correspond to the initial enthusiasm and momentum when the training began. This was in conflict with how the trainees felt at the start because their employer had agreed to the training. This requires time, persistence, and patience. ADESTE trainees advised change agents not to be discouraged if they don’t see immediate results

How are we working together?

In order for change to happen, panelists described needing support such as adequate time to transfer the knowledge, skills and competences gained through the training. Many said they wished the pilot training could have continued after the ADESTE project had ended. What was unexpected or perhaps underestimated was that to fully exploit what was gained in the training goes beyond a simple transferring process. It means more than just the transfer of knowledge and skills, but to establishing a new common way to work among colleagues, departments, and disciplines. Again the panel urged for the sector and cultural professionals to be patient for change to come.

Need more evidence?

ADESTE trainees also encountered obstacles when engaging with high level managers, directors and decision makers, even those that had greenlit



their employee's participation in the training. Trainees felt they needed *even more* jargon, evidence of audience development impact, and case studies to provide examples. They believe having this kind of knowledge and support material would go a long way in influencing upper management that audience development should be a core value of their cultural institutions.

To recap so far, there is a pronounced need for trainees to have more support when transferring what they have learned during the training. They need access to persuasive evidence and case studies. They need skills to engage with higher management. What came next was a surprise to all: a need for conflict management skills?

Can audience development cause friction?

With change comes risk. Not everyone within a cultural institution will be excited about audience development. One panelist compared introducing audience focus into a cultural organisation's strategy to bringing home a newborn to older siblings. A new addition means reshuffling limited time, energy and resources. When proposing audience development to be a priority, some ADESTE trainees encountered unexpected friction from colleagues and peers who felt their work or department was being threatened or would receive less focus from higher management if support was shifted to an audience focus. Trainees felt unprepared to deal with this unexpected reaction and could use skills to mediate conflict in the workplace in this type of scenario.

What is Action Learning and how was it received by trainees?

The choice to use Action Learning as the training module's method to stimulate deeper reflection and problem solving was a surprise for the trainees. First, because they had never heard of the Action Learning process which involves working on real challenges, using the knowledge and skills of a small group of people combined with skilled questioning, to re-interpret old and familiar concepts and produce fresh ideas.

ADESTE trainees used words like "insightful", "therapeutic", "empowering", "unexpected" to describe this process. While new to Action Learning it proved to be a useful tool to compliment the module's other focuses on knowledge, skills and competences. Here are some of the comments from the discussion:

"AL is an empowering tool that pushes you to go beyond your comfort zone and boundaries."

"Thanks to this process I learned colleagues from other institutions are dealing with the same issues

and we change common concerns and challenges"

But was Action Learning successful in all cultural contexts? All the trainees on the panel agreed that Action Learning required them to go beyond their comfort zone and that in some cultural contexts, people are not used to sharing so openly about challenges and problems they are experiencing in the work place. However, with time and practice they became more comfortable with the AL methodology and because it does require confidentiality in order to participants to freely share it also built bridges and trust among the groups. Due to cultural codes, it may take more time for people in different cultures to fully embrace how Action Learning works, but it seemed from this experience that the trainees speaking in Bilbao overcame any initial apprehensions and came to enjoy and experience its benefits.

What future opportunities could open up in the future?

This discussion was prompted by a question from the audience if the trainees would be interested in ADESTE taking a wider approach, maybe even to a future cross-border exchange? To this question, the trainees on the panel all enthusiastically thought it would be a great opportunity for both their institution and their professional development. In this discussion the idea was for a potential professional exchange where ADESTE trainees could "swap" institutions.

Opening doors for collaboration

First, for their institutions it would be a way to open doors for collaboration and partnerships with other cultural organisations in different countries. The exchange would be a way to build trust between two cultural organisations, foster mutual understanding, enhance intercultural dialogue and thereby open avenues for projects, traveling exhibitions, hosting artists, ... just to name a few possibilities thrown into the discussion.

Gaining new perspectives

Hosting an ADESTE trainee who works in audience development to carry out a professional exchange in their organisation, the host could bring fresh eyes and an outside perspectives to its audience practices. With this knowledge the host could make improvements and implement and test new ideas.

Bringing home innovative ideas and practice

The organisation sending their employee to the host organisation would benefit with innovative ideas and practices that could be brought back and shared.

Investing in professional development

This kind of exchange could be a win-win for the cultural organisation and the employee. The employee can expand their knowledge and skills by having this experience abroad and the employer benefits from having staff that has up to date skills and new knowledge to help solve issues related to audience development.

Parallel session for professionals in the cultural and creative sector

What happens when you gather professionals from the cultural and creative sector in one room to discuss what can be done to push audience development forward, the hard and soft skills required today, and training that can help the sector reach its audience objectives and targets?

At this point in the ADESTE conference programme, the participants split up for parallel sessions: ADESTE trainees went off to reflect more deeply on the training process and outputs; academics and researchers went to hear and/or present their latest research papers done on the topic of audience development; and professionals and remaining stakeholders discussed their audience development challenges and professional needs.

Focusing here on the last group, this was an opportunity to gather different perspectives from across Europe from professionals who were cultural managers, directors, policy makers, communication officers, and trainers.

When asked if money was no object, what would professionals most like from a training? Coming just after the panel “Lessons Learnt: A Talk with the ADESTE Trainees from Different EU Countries” the conversations first echoed the need for cross-border professional exchanges. Many in the room agreed that a training experience that involved learning by doing would be extremely beneficial.

However, back in the real world, budgets in the cultural sector are tight, professionals are expected to do more with less, and all are feeling the pressure of “not having enough time”. Could they really have the money to finance an exchange and take the time away from their professional responsibilities? In reaction to the budgetary concern, European funding programmes such as Erasmus Plus or programmes like Tandem were suggested as resources. For the later - the

question of time – not much convincing is needed of the short and long-term benefits of such an experience for all parties involved (the employers, the staff, the host organisation, and the sending organisation), but might put pressure on limited human resources in the immediate time during the exchange.

It was also suggested that these exchanges go beyond cross border exchanges, but reach cross sectorially for professionals to experience different cultural disciplines mixing heritage, performing arts, festivals, museums, etc. This could be a way to stimulate cooperation across cultural fields and create ties that would make the cultural sector stronger as a whole, more sustainable.

It was suggested at some point in the future for these audience development exchanges could be formalized into a peer-to-peer network of AD professionals who participate, similar to the Tandem programme of the European Cultural Foundation.

Participants were also curious to learn more about Action Learning as professionals expressed they too felt “stuck” sometimes, were lacking fresh perspectives, could benefit from deeper reflection, stimulate problem solving, and combat feelings of isolation. This led to having a discussion on the necessary attitudes such as an open mind set, a proclivity for sharing, a desire for collaboration... all key attributes for professionals working in audience development since they must work and collaborate with different departments (marketing, education, communication, etc.).

Finally, last major topic brought up among the group was the collection of data. The lack of data was a challenge that arose during the pilot training so it was no surprise when it came up in the discussion at the conference, first in the trainee panel discussion and now again amongst the professional group.

The challenge of collecting data is something many cultural organisations struggle with either because they do not have the knowledge of what needs to be asked and collected, lack the tools in place to collect it, or the human and financial resources to analyse it. It was not evident with the limited time and the session coming to an end to define: Who could be in a position to help the cultural sector overcome this challenge? Where the money to implement it would come from? How would this be transferred to the cultural sector? But it was clear that training and educating cultural organisations on ways to collect data adapt to the reality, resources and knowledge within an organisation could already be a first step. Raising



awareness on the importance of data collection for having a strong audience focus is another.

As the session came to an end it showed that cultural professionals across cultures, countries and cultural fields share common challenges. It provides more evidence of professionals needed spaces to gather, raise their concerns, hear from others and brainstorm to find solutions to common problems.

Audience development from a cultural policy perspective

For the afternoon plenary session on 10 March, ADESTE had invited Monica Urian, Programme Manager from the European Commission/DG Education and Culture, Creative Europe Programme, Henrik Martén, Head of Development from Kultur i Väst in Sweden, and Joanna Sz wajcowska, Deputy Director of the Culture Department of the Capital City of Warsaw in Poland. They shared how audience development is being promoted and used at different levels of government: European, regional, and local.

European level

Why is the European Commission concerned with audience development? Access to culture is a human right and as a public institution, the Commission needs to ensure access to culture is in place for all citizens. It can be acknowledged that there is still much to be done on this point. In many Member States, culture remains in the hands of the privileged which is why encouraging the cultural sector through policy, funding, dialogue, and research to integrate an audience focus into their organisations can increase active consumption and participation in culture.

With the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, 450 million euros is available for the cultural sector from 2014-2020 which is actually an increase from the previous culture programme. And for the first time applicants requesting Creative Europe funding were

evaluated how they would put audience development into practice in their cultural project proposal. The Commission is also stimulating dialogue and increased awareness of audience development during the European Culture Forum which is organised every two years as well as having organised a conference in 2012 on "European Audiences: 2020 and Beyond". And finally a recent example of supporting research comes with the Commission requesting a study on "How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations, A study on audience development at the European level."

In order for Europe's cultural sector to have an audience centric approach, the European Commission sees itself as responsible to designate funding, greenlight the best projects, increase dialogue around the topic, create a knowledge database, and provide evidence of AD success, lessons learnt, and innovative practice.

Regional level

How do you juggle the needs of 59 municipalities in one region? How do you include culture into the larger development strategy for sustainability? Where will the funding come from?

To provide an example of how one region in an EU Member State tackles these questions, the conference organisers welcomed Henrik Martén, Head of Development from Kultur i Väst in Sweden to the stage. Kultur i Väst is the Västra Götaland region's cultural administration and manages development work under the authority of the Cultural Affairs Committee. The body has been commissioned to strengthen and develop the role of culture and forms of art in Västra Götaland and to initiate investments based on the strategic cultural policy objectives. This work involves creating the prerequisites for evenly distributed cultural activities from a geographical, content and social perspective. The objective is for accessibility, equality, diversity and internationalization to characterize the development of the cultural sector.

To bring the audience focus, within Kultur i Väst, RePublik - Audiences Sweden - is a centre for

audience development and engagement. It promotes increased and widened participation in the public cultural sector and supports the development of diverse and audience centered cultural organisations. With a special focus on leadership and artistic practices, building on the experience and knowledge of its partners, RePublik aims to make visible the great variety of approaches to audience centered development and engagement happening in the region. The belief is that by sharing experiences and good practice among different artistic and cultural fields further development will be stimulated to strengthen innovative cultural leadership.

Together with partners in Sweden, Scandinavia and beyond, the centre aims to develop the services best needed to support and join forces with the many transformative efforts that are made in organisations and institutions, big and small, every day. In 2016 this will manifest in a transnational conference Arts and Audiences to be held from 7-8 in Gothenburg, Sweden. It is being produced by RePublik, Kultur i Väst, in collaboration with NPU - Norsk Publikumsutvikling, and CKI - The Danish Centre for Arts and Interculture and Producentbyrå. This event, open to all audience development stakeholders in Europe aims to foster dialogue on audience development with specific focus on topics of "Audience in Transition", "Artists in Transition", "Institutions in Transition", and "Leadership in Transition".

Local level

The last panellist to take the floor was Joanna Sz wajcowska, Deputy Director of the Culture Department of the Capital City of Warsaw in Poland. In 2015 the City of Warsaw joined the ADESTE project as an associate partner. The collaboration with the network of recognised experts in the area of audience development has been of particular importance in a broader context of the activities of the city's Culture Department.

Culture has had a rising importance in Warsaw's cultural policy. Since 2012, the city has been implementing one of its main strategic documents: "The city of culture and citizens. The Programme of culture development in Warsaw until 2020". Audience development is one of the three main areas in which the city would like to intensify its activities, the others being cultural institution management and support for creativity. It is an important objective for Warsaw to conduct a coherent and integrated urban cultural policy based on relationship with audiences.

The Culture Department was keen to seek allies and expertise on audience development issues.

Thanks to the participation in the ADESTE programme, the department was able to organise a pilot set of workshops for employees of the municipal institutions. Its success could be measured not only by the satisfaction of the participants, but also by very practical developments articulated in projects of collaboration between the institutions. Currently the involved institutions are working on a common audience survey. Next is the planning of a second edition of the training programme for 14 other institutions in spring 2016.

The department has the intention to continue the cooperation in the field of audience development, since a broad network of international partners and the opportunity to exchange experience is extremely valuable. Moreover, the City of Warsaw has an intention to develop a Competence Centre in the field of AD, which will be responsible for research and analysis, as well as for providing skills and knowledge to professionals working in cultural organisations and for offering substantial expert support to cultural institutions and NGOs.

As the microphone was handed to members of the audience, a question about data and analysis was brought up again but this time as: *"What is audience development success look like?"* A recurring question during the conference, it more questions like: *"Is there a golden number so you know you've succeeded?"* *"Is it a trap to only measure the success of audience development be measured by numbers?"* All panellists agreed that in their situations that hard data is important, but so is collecting evidence of the qualitative impact of audience development. The study which the European Commission has requested is one example, but cultural organisations should also engage directly with audiences to understand what the experience has meant for them.

It was also said qualitative information can be especially useful to know who are a cultural organisation's ambassadors. Who are the visitors who are going to champion for your organisation? Share their positive experiences with their family, friends, co-workers, etc.? It is also important to give this space to others to tell their story, to express themselves so that they feel attached to your organisation, have a sense of ownership so that they will want to support it.

The many examples provided by the panellists of what is being done at the European, regional and local level are further evidence that policy makers, governments and public authorities see the value and importance of audience development and are working to strengthen the dialogue, raise awareness, share knowledge, and invest in skills.

World Café

The World Café was an inviting space for conference participants, speakers, ADESTE trainers and trainees, and project partners to exchange ideas, build on deep reflections, and broaden their horizons.

In three rotations, participants were asked to answer a specific question at each turn so that by the end of the exercise everyone had expressed their views on:

- What would help audience development professionals do their job better?
- Why is audience development important, what difference does it make?
- What changes in cultural policy would make it easier to develop audiences?

A selection of the most recurring ideas and points of view are shared in the table below.

What would help audience development professionals do their job better?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give more time for audience development projects because not all results/impact are available in a short or mid-term timeframe • Allow audience development professionals to take risks by encouraging an environment that does not penalize failure and instead focuses on what was learned, what could be improved? • Cultural organisations should not see themselves as competitors because there is so much potential for exchange of practice or possibilities for collaboration that could be mutually beneficial • Invest in updating skills and knowledge for cultural professionals working in the field so that they can learn and adapt to a rapidly changing environment and ensure they work they are doing is relevant
Why is audience development important, what difference does it make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an audience focus in an organisation helps to change from an “I work for” mindset to a “I work with” one that is the first key step to implementing an audience focus and a more inclusive attitude • Audience development helps bring culture into the public debate and ensures it stays there since audiences are always changing as are societal consumption behavior and habits • Audience development helps keep cultural and arts organisations fresh because they have to constantly innovative and adapt to the audience • Audience development can help to make the cultural sector sustainable but also increase the well-being of new audiences, foster mutual understanding and increase social cohesion
What changes in cultural policy would make it easier to develop audiences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase cultural policies that support audience development at the local and national level which will help to make it a priority for cultural organisations • Cultural policy should be developed the same way as audience development policy is: listening, knowing your audience, increasing involvement • Cultural policy should be sustainable have long-term goals that are not shifted or renounced with changes in political parties coming into power • Cultural policy makers should exchange with other sectors to see cross-over and where audience development in the cultural sector can also make an impact on society, the economy, the environment, education, etc.



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From the field: Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 European Capital of Culture

On the second day of the programme, conference participants gathered in nearby Donostia-San Sebastián at a satellite campus of the University of Deusto.

What better way to be welcomed in this city than to begin with a presentation of Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 European Capital of Culture (ECoC) given by Iker Tolosa and Enara García who are working on the project.

San Sebastián is a medium-sized city with almost 186,000 inhabitants. It is a tertiary, tourist city, eminently commercial, with strong emphasis on services and congresses. In recent years, it has moved into the leading position among European cities, largely because of its commitment to science, technology, sustainable development and culture.

As holder of the ECoC title in 2016, this ambitious project aims to attract people from the city, the larger region and beyond as well as from all walks of life, ages, and backgrounds. It has a true audience development focus as the programme

has been designed with the people in mind. And it'll have to be proven too. The team is held to a very strict assessment that will look to see if a diverse audience has participated, if social cohesion has increased, whether learning opportunities were fostered, experimentation facilitated, and if cultural practitioners, actors, amateurs became more professional. In the end, did it bring people closer to culture and culture closer to people?

How are those behind the project doing this? Behind a successful ECoC is a strong strategy. With more than 100 projects, performances, and laboratories the team focused on three key priorities: leadership, co-creativity, and active participation. Just one example of how the distance between the artist, the creation process and the public be minimized and for the public to take a step from participation to active engagement is a lottery. A lottery was used to select citizens for a Citizen Committee that targeted segments of the population that would usually not involve themselves in culture. This committee had a voice and responsibility to help choose projects for inclusion in the programme and to receive funding. It brought people closer to the project and gave them a sense of pride that they had contributed to what would be impacting thousands during the ECoC programme.

As a European Capital of Culture, the project also seeks to promote stronger ties with the rest of Europe. To this end, the programming has invited artists and artistic companies in Europe. There is also a series called *European Dialogues*, a cycle of meetings between citizens open to participation where attendees will have the opportunity to discuss European issues with leading figures such as politicians, academics and artists.

The San Sebastian 2016 programme has been designed to leave a specific legacy for the future and create a network that is sustainable after the project concludes: *“a local community with greater freedom, humanism and respect towards human rights, a more participatory society that learns to solve its conflicts through culture and the arts.”*

There is no doubt about the enormity of an ECoC project and this presentation in Donostia-San Sebastián. Hearing from two professionals working on the project provided an interesting, although brief view into the knowledge, skills and innovation going on behind the scenes. As a concluding remark the speakers offered a piece of advice to professionals involved in an ECoC project or application: you surely have the

motivation and dedication, but be ready for the hard work, long hours and to make some difficult work/life choices. But in the end, the rewards outweigh the hardships just to see the impact your project has on the lives of everyday citizens.

How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations

To conclude the conference's plenary sessions, the audience was invited to hear about a study on audience development “How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations”. To present the study was expert Cristina Da Milano, President of ECCOM – Idee per la cultura. This study, requested and supported by the European Commission gathers a consortium, experts and associate partners, many of whom were involved in the ADESTE project.

Launched in spring 2016, the study will carry out desk research for a bibliography on audience development, a glossary of terms and an analysis of the main relevant ideas and topics in the field. It will also produce an overview of practices and



case analysis aiming to include 25 cases from 17 EU countries. This will result in an analytic catalogue and a practical guide to be widely disseminated throughout Europe at the end of 2016.

Relying on the strong group of distinguished experts the study will rely on the direct expertise and knowledge of the consortium and network of experts and institutions associated with the project. A call was also launched to gather exemplary praxis, specifically addressed to small-medium European cultural organisations which are experimenting relevant shifts towards a more audience-centric approach.

Next through a selection process, cases will be chosen based on their size, staff specifically committed to audience development, the objectives and goals related to AD strategies, geographic area, different cultural and creative sectors, kinds of audiences involved, sustainability and strategic perspective, availability of existing data and information, and finally, the possibility to evaluate data.

At the time of the conference the consortium was just at the beginning phases of its ambitious work programme but all conference participants were invited to keep a close eye on its developments and contribute best practice to be considered for the analysis and practical guide to come out later this year.

Audience development: between practices and theories

What do practitioners, academics and researchers have to say near the end of the two-day ADESTE conference? How do they see the relationship practices and theories?

To nourish this dialogue, invited panelists were: Macarena Cuenca (University of Deusto, Spain), Steven Hadley (Arts Management and Cultural Policy, School of Creative Arts, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland), Marcin Poprawski (Vice-President of ENCATC, the European network on cultural management and policy), Sergio Galasso (R&D and project management for *mare culturale urbano*, Italy); with ADESTE trainee Jakub Supera (Museum of Warsaw, Poland), and facilitated by Alessandro Bollo (Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Italy).

As short for time, the concise discussions mainly centered around the role of academia, how to involve researchers, and raising awareness within

the professional realm.

The role of academia: Today there are gaps between practice, theory and policy. The academic working on the field of audience development in the cultural sector need to speak up. We need more work done (throughout Europe) on audience development. There are many “classics,” revered authors in the cultural sector on so many topics. We should continue to build and expand the range of audience development “classics” that can influence theory, practice and policy.

Bring in the researchers: Data was a recurring theme during the conference. Whether it was the lack of it, questions of how to collect it, or what do to with it once you have it. The panel underlined the importance of bringing in researchers and allocating funding to understand audience data and extrapolate key trends and evidence. The research community could also be brought in at the design phase of creative projects to lend their expertise and insight from working with audience data. Furthermore, this data, if shared, can be used by researcher and academics to study the sector and inform policy makers on the latest trends and developments happening in the cultural field.

We do audience development without knowing we're doing it: The term audience development is not common in all European countries but the practice is there even if cultural professionals are not always aware their actions fall into the ideology and practice of AD. It's clear that increased awareness is necessary because the more Europe's cultural sector is familiar with the term and practice, the more the ideas behind it and practice can be propelled and put in the mainstream.

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